Project Name

P4 Reflection

Mattia De Lotto

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Research Mentor: Elena Longhin
BT Mentor: Rufus van den Ban
Design Mentor: Stefano Milani

The initial research question guiding this project was phrased as follows:

> *In the context of the Cadore area in the Italian Alps, what could the role of architectural practice be in engaging with the complexity and uncertainty of future scenarios of this landscape?*

This question assumed that architecture possesses the tools and agency to act meaningfully within this landscape. However, as the research unfolded, a counter-question surfaced:

> *Does the Cadore region even need architecture?*

This reframing emerged from a growing awareness of the region's systemic fragilities. In the early stages, my understanding of Cadore was partial, shaped more by intuition than insight. Through a multi-scalar research process, the complexities of the region revealed themselves not only in material and ecological terms, but also in representational, infrastructural, and symbolic dimensions. This understanding gradually redirected both the site and programmatic focus of the design.

The method I employed - which prioritised openness, interdisciplinarity, and iterative feedback - allowed research and design to develop as two interwoven strands. Rather than progressing through clearly delineated phases, the project maintained a constant dialogue between analytical insight and spatial articulation. Architecture was thus not conceived as a solution, but as an instrument of observation, representation, and care.

Key to this engagement was a critical reflection on the *landscape imaginary* and its production. The project builds upon a theoretical framework that conceives of the landscape not as a neutral background, but as a layered and contested palimpsest. Drawing from thinkers such as Corboz and Turri, the research articulated the Cadore landscape as a site of overlapping human and non-human systems, where infrastructure, memory, and ecological processes collide. This conceptual lens framed the design as an active participant in the representation of landscape, not just its transformation. In this sense, the architecture proposed is not merely physical intervention, but a representational device within a longer chronology of territorial imaging and measurement.

The research phase resulted in the programme's design being delineated as a proto-basecamp for landscape exploration and measurement. The idea was to create a place to return to and collect knowledge from exploration. This programme and its implications, together with the research outcomes regarding the landmarks that define a landscape's image, led to the selection of a specific site for intervention: the former cement factory in Castellavazzo. This site is pivotal in understanding human impact on the alpine landscape during the Great Acceleration era, as part of a broader system of matter extraction and transformation.

The choice of this particular site presented a number of complexities, including the scale of the building complex, its current state and its impact on the landscape. Nonetheless, there is also an intangible layer of brutal operations on the surrounding area.

Understanding the site's territorial implications as part of the extraction machine in a further research phase delineated the design approach at different scales. In the first design stage, the existing building is reshaped and its impact on the landscape is reduced through the demolition of various parts, resulting in a clearer view of the industrial artefact as a relic, a ruin that cannot be completely erased. The demolition material, sorted and stored on site, then shapes the new intervention, transforming the machine that once extracted matter from the landscape into the landscape that now extracts matter.

Moreover, the idea of using architecture as a tool to mark and highlight the intricate relationship between the existing building and its surroundings led to the addition of new parts to this site. The scope for operation was found in the tension between these two elements.

Throughout the graduation studio, sustained mentorship proved essential. At P2, feedback urged a clearer delineation of the architectural proposal's scope, particularly in relation to the landscape as a measurable system. This prompted a conceptual shift: the design became understood as a component within a broader territorial network- a distributed infrastructure of observation and care.

At P3, further feedback focused on the representational strategies and scale of the intervention. The transformation of the cement factory gained specificity, not as a singular monumental gesture, but as part of a broader re-reading of the Alpine landscape. In this sense, the feedback loop was not only a technical refinement but a methodological necessity. The interdisciplinary team of mentors was fundamental to this dynamic, allowing research, representation, and spatial experimentation to inform each other continuously.

In the final phase, the project will focus on merging the research and design trajectories into a single, coherent artefact. This will take the form of an architectural basecamp that does not seek to resolve complexity but frames it - a modest infrastructure for measurement, narration, and situated reflection. The objective is to construct a design that is critically embedded within the existing spatial palimpsest, responding to fragility not through erasure or replacement, but through attentive engagement.

1. What is the relation between your graduation project topic, your master track (Architecture), and the MSc AUBS programme?

The project intersects with the MSc AUBS programme and the Architecture track through its engagement with landscape transformation, post-industrial reuse, and the spatial implications of climate change. It addresses the need for a design practice that operates across multiple scales, capable of articulating critical reflections on infrastructural legacy and territorial identity. The project embodies the program's emphasis on context-specificity, interdisciplinarity, and research-led design.

2. How did your research influence your design/recommendations, and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

Research was the generative force behind the design. Beginning with a territorial reading of Cadore's fragility, the investigation identified the spatial logic and symbolic resonance of sites like the cement factory. This led to a programmatic proposal for a basecamp of landscape measurement and observation. At the same time, the act of designing redefined the research focus, revealing new layers of meaning in the landscape and introducing the notion of architecture as a representational tool. The result is a reciprocal methodology where research and design co-evolve.

3. How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

The value lies in maintaining conceptual continuity across scales and disciplines. By refusing to separate research and design into distinct phases, the project cultivated a more integrated and reflective practice. The methodology - multi-scalar, transdisciplinary, and iterative - enabled an

engagement with the site that is both critical and situated. This approach allowed for greater depth, clarity, and responsiveness to the landscape's complexities.

4. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope, and implications of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

The project interrogates the contemporary condition of Alpine landscapes, questioning the legacy of extraction, infrastructural violence, and climate-induced fragility. It challenges architecture's conventional boundaries by proposing a representational and symbolic engagement with place. Ethically, it resists superficial intervention, opting instead for a slow, site-specific form of design that foregrounds care and attentiveness. Academically, it contributes to the discourse on architecture's role in post-industrial and ecologically unstable contexts. It engages directly with the idea of landscape as a constructed and evolving image - one in which architectural gestures play a role not only in space-making, but in shaping perception and collective memory.

By positioning the project within debates around the Anthropocene and the technological re-engineering of landscape, the work argues for a form of architecture that is not driven by formal novelty or territorial imposition, but by reflexive, situated responsibility.

5. How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

While specific to the Cadore region, the project offers a transferable model for re-engaging with abandoned infrastructural artefacts across Alpine and other mountainous contexts. Its emphasis on observation, representation, and critical reuse can be adapted to similar post-industrial landscapes. The insights gained serve as a foundation for further research into architecture's potential as a mediating practice in fragile territories.

As a continuation of this reflective trajectory, two further questions that do not seek immediate answers but are instead intended to provoke further critical engagement with the project are proposed. These questions arise from the tensions encountered throughout the design process, and point toward deeper inquiries into the ethics, methods, and implications of architectural intervention in complex territorial conditions. They are meant to remain open—productive points of departure for future thought, rather than closures.

1. What is the value of the approach towards landscape fragility, history, and complexity that has been adopted in the design process?

2. What forms of architectural agency are possible when the act of building is no longer the primary response?